

FROM RICHMOND DOWN TO URBANNA

Through a Goodly Country—If
Richmond Wants It, Now's
the Time.

WILL CITY MEET URBANNA?

Four Rich Counties Knocking at
Richmond's Door—Shall the
Same Be Opened?

BY FRANK S. WOODSON.

With the opening of the new year the Richmond City Council will have a high, interesting little proposition to wrestle with. The town of Urbanna, on the Rappahannock River, and all of the country from there up to Richmond—some mighty good country it is, too, encompassing the whole or parts of the counties of Middlesex, King, William, Hanover, and Henrico—wants to get in closer business touch with Richmond, and it seems to be up to Richmond to decide if they shall do it.

The proposition, as I understand it, is to build a railway line from Richmond to Urbanna, or, more properly speaking, from Urbanna to Richmond. For this purpose the Richmond, Urbanna and Peninsula Railroad Company has been incorporated. It is the purpose of this company to build a line from Urbanna, away down yonder on the Rappahannock River, to Richmond, covering a distance of fifty-five miles, through the counties of Middlesex, King and Queen, King William, Hanover and Henrico.

With the exception of the Henrico territory in this proposed line, all of the territory of this rich section has been from time immemorial diverted from Richmond because of the lack of transportation facilities. Rappahannock River and York River steamboats have carried it all to Baltimore. The people in this rich territory want to trade with Richmond. It is to their interest to do so, if they can get there. They think they have found a way to get there, and they are doing the good work without asking any more than moral support from Richmond. Richmond could well afford to build all of the proposed Richmond, Urbanna and Peninsula Railroad, but the people are not asking the much of Richmond. However, they do want a cheap way to get into the town. Their way in is from Seven Pines, and a street railway company holds the franchise.

It's Up to Richmond.

According to the best information I can gather, the street railway folks are willing enough to sell or even give away their little old franchise, but there are a few dozen people along the line who have been enjoying some peculiar privileges, and who are not willing to surrender these privileges for the general good. And just here comes the only fight I have heard of.

It seems to me that the only question at issue is shall a big public enterprise fall down just to keep faith with the line of a few selfish folks along the line of a few selfish folks? But that is a question that is to be considered by the City Council, and maybe by some other legislative or judicial body. My information is that the making of the railway from Urbanna to Richmond depends entirely upon the ability of the company to buy the line from this city to Seven Pines. The owners of that line are not only willing but anxious to sell, and the other folks are willing enough to buy; but a few individuals who have certain chartered rights stand in the way. These all are legal points and rights that may have to be considered in the courts, and they are, of course, matters that a newspaper has nothing to do with. But there is one thing that this newspaper has a great deal to do with, and that is greater Richmond development.

Some Telling Figures.

I have talked with people who are in a position to know a thing or two, and have gathered some facts that the business people of Richmond may well consider, and after consideration some of them may have a word or two to say to City Councilmen and other folks who hold or claim to hold a whole lot of political power. I am told that it is the purpose of the Richmond, Urbanna and Peninsula Railroad Company, subject to the approval of the Council of the city of Richmond, to connect that part of this section lying along and between the Rappahannock, the York, the Planktank, Mattaponi and Pamunkey Rivers with the city of Richmond by means of a standard gauge railroad running from some point on the Seven Pines line to Urbanna. This

road will traverse a part of Henrico county, the counties of Hanover, King William, King and Queen, Middlesex, and will cross the Chickahominy, the Pamunkey, the Mattaponi and the Planktank Rivers. The population of these counties is as follows: Henrico, 23,437; Hanover, 17,200; King William, 5,239; King and Queen, 5,574; Middlesex, 5,852; total, 67,455.

With the exception of Henrico and Hanover counties the entire section, including the large region on the north and south of the Rappahannock River, is almost entirely tributary to Baltimore, and that city in the distributing point for its millions of dollars worth of farm products, timber, live stock, fish and oysters. Richmond of right should be the beneficiary of this immense volume of trade.

It is also the intention of this company to tap the trade of the counties on the northern shore of the Rappahannock River by means of ferries from Urbanna to Irvington or some other points in Lancaster county, and by short lines throughout the adjacent country, thus placing a large part of the Northern Neck in trade relations with Richmond. The Northern Neck has never before enjoyed.

Some Figures Worth While.

The Mattaponi River receives and ships \$6,087 tons of freight per annum, of the estimated value of \$51,657. The Pamunkey receives and ships \$2,961 tons of freight per annum, estimated to be worth \$14,144, while the Rappahannock receives and ships 297,210 tons of freight annually, of the value of \$6,162,912. The town of Urbanna alone, the eastern terminus of the proposed road, received and shipped during the year 1909, 31,875 tons, estimated to be worth \$1,065,550. The shipments from this section consist mainly of lumber, cord wood, railroad ties, farm products, fruit, garden truck, poultry, fish, oysters and game. The people of this section of Virginia are entirely dependent upon water transportation to Baltimore, and consequently only that portion of the several counties lying on the water is properly cultivated and developed. A railroad running through this section would encourage development of those parts of the several counties which have not the advantage of proximity to the water, and would in return be the preferred method of distribution of all the general merchandise needed for the entire Tidewater region.

But Is It Worth While?

The cultivation and development of those districts remote from the water would considerably augment the volume of trade above referred to, and Richmond would at once become the distributing point for these additional shipments without competition, as well as the purchasing point food supplies for the entire section. A question now arises: Can Richmond get control of that immense volume of business which now goes by boat to Baltimore? And this question can only be answered in the affirmative. The shipper will naturally choose the cheapest and quickest means by which to get his goods to the great markets, provided the service is adequate and satisfactory.

MITIGATION OF SENTENCE

Washington, December 23.—Senator Cullerton and members of the Texas delegation in Congress are endeavoring to secure the mitigation of the sentence of dismissal from the army of Lieutenant Samuel Orchard, Third Infantry, who was convicted by court-martial in Alaska for embezzlement. The record of the proceedings is now being reviewed by Judge Advocate General Clegg. Later they will be submitted to President Taft for his approval. Lieutenant Orchard served in the First Texas Volunteer Infantry during the Spanish-American War.

Camphor Made Down South.

If there is anything the South cannot produce I would just like to know what it is. Somewhere from Texas to the Potomac River, or somewhere from Florida to the Allegheny Mountains the South can make anything that the world will thrive on. Here is a floating item of news I catch from an exchange:

The Federal government has conducted for four or five years experiments in growing the camphor tree near Lake City, Fla., and it is reported that the experts are satisfied that the tree will thrive on the sandy soil of West Florida and will bring profitable returns in gum camphor. Some of the trees of the true have been planted recently at the East Bay Forest Nursery.

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